mense amount of labor expended, the grain harvest per acre is not much if any greater than that in the less intensively cultivated farms of the United States. For example, the average yield of wheat per acre is about that in the United States, and of rice only about fifty per cent. more. Much of this can be accounted for by differences in climate and other physical surroundings. However, better seed selection and scientific methods of fighting plant and animal diseases would work improvement. Poor methods of production and marketing have been largely responsible for the loss of foreign markets for silk and especially for tea. Better agricultural implements within the reach of the Chinese farmer's purse are also possible. More propagation of better varieties would improve the quality and quantity of fruit. There are many days of seasonal unemployment, for both man and beast, and while the profitable utilization of idle time presents a serious difficulty, progress could probably be achieved toward meeting it by a better organization of the work of the farmer and by domestic industries.

Underlying the pressure of population upon subsistence are certain social and religious customs and institutions which encourage early marriage and a high birth rate. These are to be treated more at length in a later chapter, but no picture of the supply of the physical necessities of life in China is complete without the notice that they exist. Their alteration presents one of the most perplexing and fundamental of China's economic problems. Unless some reduction in the birth rate can be effected, all attempts to relieve poverty become mere palliatives.

CHANGES IN AGRICULTURE WROUGHT BY CONTACT WITH

The Occidentalizing of China in the past three or four decades has affected the farmers less than some other sections of the population. The West has made itself felt chiefly in the cities. Except for a few details, the life of the great majority of the cultivators of the soil goes on much as it did a century ago. Even in rural areas, however, changes are beginning to appear. The railway has brought modifications in the transportation system in the regions it traverses—although fully two-thirds of China proper is as yet unaffected by it. To regions bordering the coast and the Yangtze and its tributaries the steamboat has made some